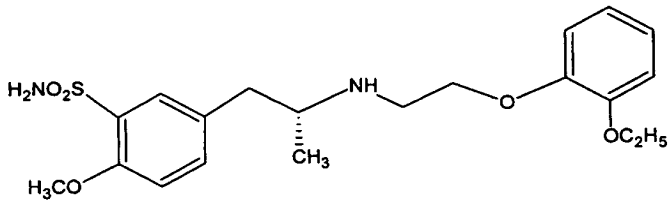
We claim:

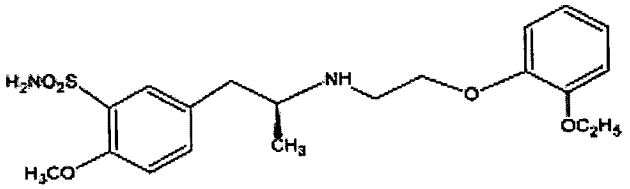
1.

A process for preparing optically pure enantiomers of (R)-5-(2-((2-(2-ethoxyphenoxy)-ethyl)amino)propyl)-2-methoxybenzenesulfonamide [R-(-)-tamsulosin] of formula Ia



(Ia)

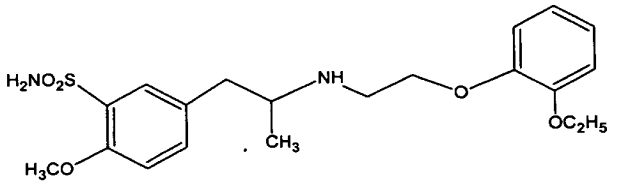
and (S)-5-(2-((2-(2-ethoxyphenoxy)-ethyl)amino)propyl)-2-methoxybenzenesulfonamide [S-(+)-tamsulosin] of formula Ib.



(Ib)

comprising:

(a) the resolution of racemic tamsulosin of formula I



(I)

by the treatment with (1R)-(-)-camphor-10-sulfonic acid and (1S)-(+)-camphor-10-sulfonic acid, resp., in an environment of organic solvents, water or mixtures thereof;

(b) further purification of the crystallized salt of R-(-)-tamsulosin or S-(+)-tamsulosin by crystallizing form organic solvents, water or mixtures thereof, until the desired optical purity is obtained;

(c) from the salt of R-(-)-tamsulosin or S-(+)-tamsulosin is released, by treatment with alkalis, the base of formula Ia or the base of formula Ib, resp.

2.

The process of claim 1 wherein steps (a) and (b) are carried out in an environment of alcohols.

3.

The process of claim 1 wherein steps (a) and (b) are carried out in an environment of water.